



Effigy Mounds National Monument

Effigy Mounds National Monument, in northeastern Iowa, preserves a landscape of man-made phenomena. Over 200 mounds can be found at the site, including 31 of which were built in the shapes of birds and bears. These mounds are considered ceremonial and sacred, especially by the Monument's 16 associated American Indian tribes.

Construction of these effigy mounds began during the Late Woodland Stage (1,400-750 Before Present). Ceremonial mound-building dates back to the end of the Archaic Period (9,000-2,500 B.P.), but it was in the region of the present-day Monument that mounds first started to take the shape of animals.

Originally the mounds were used as communal cemeteries, established for religious and ceremonial burial practices. However, many of the effigy mounds are NOT burial sites, but, according to American Indian mythology, a sacred space for bringing together man, nature, and the spirit world.

There are also linear/rectangular mounds that were created for unknown ceremonial purposes. Some people believe they were used to mark seasonal observances or celestial event, while others believe they might have been built as boundary markers.

Effigy Mounds National Monument provides all of us with an opportunity to observe and learn about an earlier culture, so we may better understand, and celebrate, Native American culture today.

To learn more, visit: www.nps.gov/efmo/